JAYWALK

INDETERMINACY IN
THE BLUEGRASS

THE SWALLOWS

ISSUE 2

background

In the bluegrass region of Kentucky, the tobacco warehouses that once shaped daily life now sit mostly empty as quiet reminders of the past. Their rafters, that once hung tobacco, now cradle swallow nests each summer, as the birds return to buildings in flux, mirroring the uncertainty of the land below.

This group of photographs documents one of many agricultural economies navigating an unclear future: where farmers pivot to new crops, officials place their hopes on tourism, and longtime residents hold tight to a way of life rooted in the land. It is not a summary of this space but rather a visual record of a rural community reckoning with the end of an era—just a chapter in a larger story about the changing face of rural America.

LEFT Brooke Kelly, 24, puts a shirt on her youngest son Ayvion, 2, in her living room on May 29, 2025, in Cynthiana, Kentucky.

RIGHT PJ Simpson wipes his face while talking with his crewman Bob Chaffee at Mudlick Valley Raceway in Wallingford, Kentucky, on August 2, 2025.

OPENING Juan Elorea, an H-2A visa worker from Mexico, looks for misplaced tobacco saplings on the lower field at the Dunaway Farm in Boyd, Kentucky, on the morning of June 2, 2025.

William Troy Fryman poses with dolls at his house at 103 Oddville Ave. in Cynthiana, Kentucky, on July 23, 2025. Troy and his brother Robbie buy old estates to flip what's inside them.

Students of the Harrison County High School Marching Band warm up at Band Camp in the parking lot of Harrison County High School in Cynthiana, Kentucky, on July 17, 2025.

Silas (left), Grayson (middle) and Rayelynne Beamon (right) play outside their home off Delta Court on Memorial Day on May 26, 2025, in Cynthiana, Kentucky.

LEFT A deacon from Robinson Christian Church prepares for Bible School on July 30, 2025, in Robinson, Kentucky.

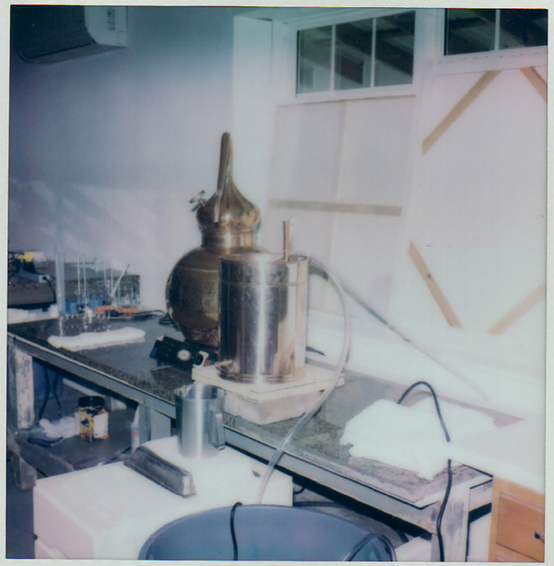
RIGHT The Switzer family burns some of their trash two days after Kyler Switzer's birthday next to their home in Alberta, Kentucky, on July 3, 2025.

LEFT Elder Kurt Raglin lowers the flags outside Victory Baptist Church to half mast ahead of Samuel Lee Gross's (1962-2025) funeral viewing at 11:00 a.m. and service at 1:00 p.m. at Victory Baptist Church at 213 Cs-1004, in Cynthiana, Kentucky, on July 11, 2025. Gross, a veteran of the U.S. Army, passed away days after moving into a new apartment in Lexington, Kentucky, from carbon monoxide poisoning.

RIGHT A flag hangs from an excavator off Leesburg Rd. next to Macy's Fireworks in Cynthiana, Kentucky, on July 21, 2025.

LEFT Juan Elorea, an H-2A visa worker from Mexico restocks the tractor, driven by Edge Heriberto, with tobacco saplings to be planted on the lower field at the Dunaway Farm at 1547 KY HWY 1054 in Boyd, Kentucky, on the morning of June 2, 2025.

RIGHT Patricia Gauge bags tobacco at the Kentucky's Best Cigarette and Tobacco Factory in Cynthiana, Kentucky, on August 4, 2025.



ABOVE A distillery in Harrison County, Kentucky, on July 14, 2025.

PREVIOUS Scott's Transport Company helps move a double wide home for the Smith family in Rutland, Kentucky, on July 21, 2025. Scott's Transport, based in London, Kentucky, helps people living across the region move their homes.

Chase Puckett butchers a snapping turtle he found on the road outside his grandmother's house in Oddville, Kentucky, on June 30, 2025.

LEFT An employee at the Riverview Meat Company washes blood and feces off the floor from Josh Smith's cow, #19, on the morning of Tuesday May 20, 2025, in Cynthiana, Kentucky. When he dropped her off, Smith's cow had a bad upper left hoof and weighed 1,230 pounds.

RIGHT Ernie Price puts trackers on Rose, one of his raccoon hounds at their house in Colemansville, Kentucky on July 5, 2025, before going raccoon hunting with his family next to Robinson Dam in Robinson, Kentucky. Despite it not being raccoon season, Ernie helps his oldest son Levi condition his dogs for Levi's competitions that can offer a lot of scholarship money at higher levels.

Gary Gaines's funeral service at Raven Creek Cemetery in Corinth, Kentucky, on June 18, 2025.

Dawson Price holds one of his family's chickens outside his home in Colemansville, Kentucky, on July 25, 2025. The Price family keeps some roosters tied to barrels to prevent them fighting each other.

LEFT Paul Colson takes a break from milking some of his cattle in his barn in Colville, Kentucky, on June 14, 2025.

RIGHT Gregg Barnes drains a pimple on one of his sheep in the basement of an old school that was converted into a barn in Sunrise, Kentucky on June 6, 2025.

LEFT Robin Joseph hugs one of her Índio Gigante Chickens, which have the capacity to grow as tall as 4 feet, from Brazil in her yard in Antioch, Kentucky, on June 30, 2025.

RIGHT The Greased Pig Contest during the Harrison County Fair at the Harrison County Fairgrounds in Cynthiana, Kentucky, on July 19, 2025.

Ricardo Pinera an H-2A visa worker from San Luis Potosi, Mexico, cuts tobacco on Mark Saddler's farm at the end of Monroe Lane in Lair, Kentucky, on August 8, 2025.

LEFT Glenn Taylor in his Victorian home at 207 Oddville Ave., in Cynthiana, Kentucky, on June 3, 2025. Taylor moved to Cynthiana from Lexington in 2002 and purchased two Victorian homes to restore in 2021.

RIGHT The Harrison County Middle School boys archery team keeps their targets in their school gym locker room at 269 Education Dr. in Cynthiana, Kentucky, on July 22, 2025.

LEFT The Harrison County High School cheerleading team practices on the school football field in Cynthiana, Kentucky, on August 4, 2025.

RIGHT Noah Martin, 18, plays pool against his friend John, 18, at Hillbilly's Bar & Grill off of U.S.-27 on May 27, 2025, in Oddville, Kentucky. Noah and John tied 3-3 by the time they ran out of money.

Fog in the Kentucky's Best Cigarette Factory parking lot in Cynthiana, Kentucky, on August 6,

LEFT Brooklynn, 7, (left) and her brother Logan Pike, 5, (right) make sand castles in the dirt on the north side of West Penn St. in Cynthiana, Kentucky, on June 8, 2025.

RIGHT (left to right) Hillbilly Klickner, John Hayslip and Tanya Hayslip watch the tractor pull at the Harrison County Fair at the Harrison County Fairgrounds in Cynthiana, Kentucky, as seen on July 19, 2025.

LEFT Isaiah Sanders loads batteries onto a wooden pallet at Randy's Odd Jobs Recycling Center in Cynthiana, Kentucky, on June 12, 2025.

RIGHT Pastor Kurt Raglin fries catfish at a Victory Baptist Church fish fry community event at 121 Louis Stout Wy. in Cynthiana, Kentucky, as seen on July 19, 2025.

LEFT Kyree Moore, 7, consoles his younger brother Ayvion, 2, with his sisters Airyana, 3, (left) and Kynlee, 5, (right) as their mother Brooke Kelly, 24, goes to the police station to talk with her probation officers on May 29, 2025, in Cynthiana, Kentucky. Brooke later found out that one of her neighbors called the police and Child Protective Services to file a complaint.

RIGHT Nick Burns' 20th birthday sign at Lisha Munich's camp site next to the South Fork Licking River off Oscar Spradlin Rd. in Berry, Kentucky on July 5, 2025.

LEFT Jesse Strong works on his motorcycle outside his house at the corner of Cr-1344 and Martin Rd. in Stringtown, Kentucky, on July 3, 2025.

RIGHT Hay bales in Poindexter, Kentucky on July 7, 2025.

Some of David Barnes's H-2A workers from Mexico hang tobacco in one of his barns in Robinson, Kentucky, on August 11, 2025.

ISSUE II

Issue II is comprised of work I made for Boyd's Station Project 306.36, an ongoing photographic archive of Harrison County, Kentucky. In spending more time around the county, it became increasingly evident that—while on the decline—tobacco and agriculture are still the backbone of the economy, and through conversations with residents, I began making pictures of the changing region. For more about this process, my blog Field Notes (#13-16) talks about the making of this work.

BACKGROUND

In the summer of 2024, I created Jaywalk as a way to self publish my long-form, documentary-reportage visual journalism. Now that many newspapers and publications no longer have the budget nor space to support long term documentary projects, I created this publication to publish my stories as intended. Combining photographs, research, interviews and personal experiences, I created this magazine in an attempt to ensure that the voices and stories of those I document are given the space and depth they deserve.

Images made between May and August of 2025 for Boyd's Station Project 306.36.

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RIGHT Barn Swallows sit on a power-line next to a barn in Berry, Kentucky, on August 6, 2025.